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9 MAY 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

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SUBJECT: Meeting with Major General Maxwell B. Taylor

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1. Lt. Colonel [] was requested by General Maxwell B. Taylor to appear at his office at 0930 hours on 8 May 1961 for the purpose of outlining the evolution of the air strike plan regarding Project []. Upon arrival at General Taylor's office, Colonel [] was requested to write a general synopsis regarding the evolution of the plan for air strikes against Cuba. Attached hereto is a copy of the synopsis rendered.

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2. The original of the paper was given to General Taylor and one copy was given to Mr. J. C. King. Please advise if any further information is desired.

Acting Chief, ~~DDP~~
Air Div

Attachment:
Copy 3 of TS #155687

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EVOLUTION OF AIR STRIKE PLAN (CIA)

1. From the outset of this project the air strike plan was based on the premise that the CCC offensive air capability would be destroyed on the ground prior to actual landing of ground forces. However, this premise was altered in March 1961 I believe to provide for air strikes only after an airfield had been seized by ground forces. I have been informed this change resulted from a State Department objection to offensive air activity which could not be attributed to aircraft ostensibly operating from Cuban soil.

2. The original TRINIDAD Plan was based on air strikes to be conducted at Dawn on D-1. All aircraft were planned to have returned to home base no later than 10:00 local for refueling, rearming and relaunching against any targets not destroyed during the dawn attack.

3. After review of the over-all TRINIDAD Plan by JCS, the project was requested to develop alternate plans of action. Eventually, discussion by interested agencies resulted in selection of the "Bay of Pigs" Plan which was later implemented. It is my understanding that the restriction regarding air strikes cited in paragraph 1 above was imposed shortly after adoption of the "Bay of Pigs" Plan.

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4. Review of the GOC's air capability indicated that it was completely infeasible to hold all air strikes until the ground forces had successfully seized an air strip. Therefore, an interim solution was worked out whereby air strikes would be conducted at Dawn on D-Day against all airfields on which offensive aircraft were located. Two of the attacking aircraft were scheduled to land on an airfield which was to have been seized by paratroops and ground forces during the dawn air attacks. This would partially answer the question, "Where did the attacking aircraft come from?" After landing, the two B-25 aircraft were to be rearmed and be relaunched to provide air support for ground forces. The remainder of attacking aircraft were to return to their home base for quick turn around to restrike airfields and ground support targets.

5. During the first week in April 1961 I was advised by the Project Chief that a pre-D-Day attack on three airfields would be conducted by one aircraft at each airfield. Colonel Hawkins, Chief of Paramilitary Activity and myself both agreed that no less than two aircraft each should be assigned to the selected targets. This attitude was taken as a result of the number of aircraft targets located at each base plus the AAA defenses at the various targets. Later, after thorough study of the AAA defenses at Compo Libertad and San Antonio de Las Banos, Colonel Hawkins and the undersigned jointly recommended one additional aircraft each be assigned to attack the above

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named targets. This recommendation was approved.

6. Three aircraft each attacked Compo Libertad and San Antonio de Las Banos and two aircraft attacked Santiago de Cuba airfield on 15 April 1961. One attacking aircraft was lost during the attack. It is believed that the total offensive air capability available to the COC after the above attacks were two T-33s, two sea furies, and two B-26s. Between the time of the attack on 15 April and 18 April at least one more T-33 and one more B-26 aircraft were put into flyable commission and utilized by the COC.

7. On 16 April the D-Day Air Strike Plan was still as described in paragraph 4 above. However, I have been told that during the morning of 16 April a meeting attended by Mr. Bissell, Mr. Esterline, Colonel Hawkins, and Col Beerli resulted in reduction of the D-Day targets cited in the Air Operations Plan. Targets remaining as D-Day objectives were: San Antonio Air Base, Compo Libertad Air Base, Gun boats at Nueva Gerona and Batabano Naval Station.

8. During the evening of 16 April I was informed that a meeting was conducted between General Cabell, Mr. Bissell, Mr. Esterline, Colonel Beerli and Colonel Hawkins. This meeting resulted in all air strikes against COC aircraft and airfields being cancelled in favor of providing continuous close air support over the beachhead. This was a complete departure from the air operations plan. In my

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opinion this change negated any chance of success for this project.

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Lt. Colonel USAF
Chief/Project Air

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